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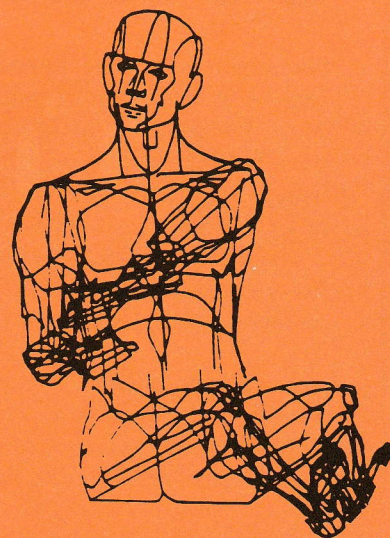
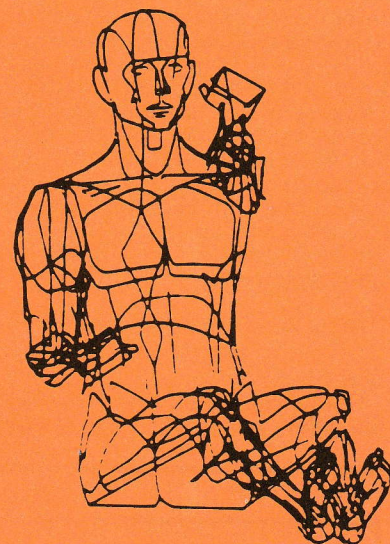
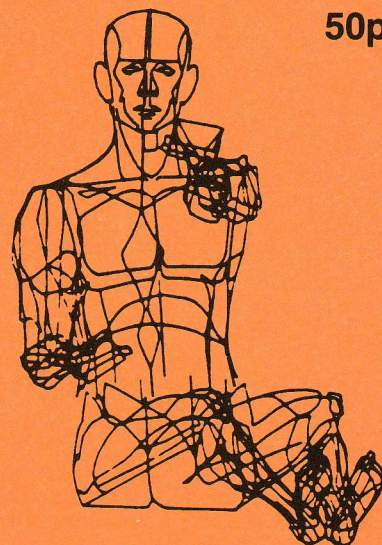
MONEY

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**THE PROFIT
SYSTEM—
BANKRUPT OF IDEAS**



"The Mail on Sunday" on socialism

The 3 January issue of the Mail on Sunday contained an article by John Junor in which he referred to John Smith as "the leader of the Socialist Party". Quite apart from the fact that we have no leader, we complained to the paper's ombudsman, Mr Chris Rees. We publish below his reply, together with our response:

I think it is fair to say that few, if any, members of the Labour Party would object to being called Socialists and many staunchly uphold the values and aims of Socialism.

There are, obviously, different interpretations of the word "Socialist" but in general terms the Labour Party is seen to be Socialist and of course John Smith is leader of that party.

It was good of you to point out the old Press Council ruling which stated that readers of the (*Evening Standard*) article would clearly understand the organisation referred to and I think the same logic must apply to the article by Sir John Junor.

Copies of this correspondence will be passed to Sir John and the Managing Editor, Mr Forgham, so that they are aware of your complaint and comments, but beyond that I do not think I can usefully take the matter any further forward.

Yours sincerely

Chris Rees, Ombudsman

Dear Mr Rees,

Having considered your response, as an allegedly independent Ombudsman, the

Executive Committee of the Socialist Party is astonished by its political reasoning.

Firstly, we are told that few members of the Labour Party would object to being called Socialists. It is surely the job of a newspaper to describe people as they are, not as they choose to be described. For many decades the only nation in Europe which had a title describing itself as being democratic was the tyrannical, state-capitalist police state, the German Democratic Republic. If your newspaper chose to describe the dictators of the ex-GDR as being democratic on the grounds that most of them would not object to being so called it would be a rather perverse way of defining truth.

Secondly, it is stated that "the Labour Party is seen to be Socialist". By whom is it so seen? Its leaders rarely describe it as standing for socialism and refuse to use the term in their publicity. Most of its active members criticise it for not being seen to be socialist. So, on what grounds do you maintain your view that it is accurate to describe it in such a way?

Thirdly, and most astonishingly, you state that not only is the Labour Party seen as being socialist, and not only is its membership willing to be so described, but "many staunchly uphold the values and aims of Socialism". This is an independent conclusion of your own which presumes some knowledge of what Socialism means.

Socialists stand for the establishment of a social system in which all goods and ser-

vices are produced solely for use, not profit. Do "many" Labour members "staunchly uphold" such an aim? If so, when have they ever upheld it? When, for example, have they ever argued the case for moneyless free access to goods and services instead of the existence of the market standing between people and the satisfaction of their needs? Please supply us with a single speech, manifesto (local, national or European) or press release which upholds, "staunchly" or otherwise, that basic socialist aim. We suspect that all that you, or any writers or researchers on your newspaper, will be able to come up with are Labour plans for administering, regulating or reforming the capitalist market. After all, the famous Clause Four of their Constitution commits them to support for the market exchange of commodities.

We shall publish your response to us, and this response to you, in our official journal, *The Socialist Standard* (which was itself established two years before the Labour Party). We commit ourselves, as democrats, to publishing any response you can give to our questions and, in particular, to letting our readers know what evidence you are able to cite in support of your contention that many members of the Labour Party do staunchly uphold the aim of Socialism. If you wish to retract the latter contention, on the grounds that there is absolutely no evidence to justify it, we shall be pleased to allow you to set the record straight.

Socialism now!

Socialism is on the agenda – and right now. But it will not come by people putting their trust in leaders. It will be established when the vast majority of workers understand it, want it and democratically organise for it in a party which is not out to mend capitalism but to end it.

Socialism means the total abolition of capitalism. An end to private and state ownership and control of the means of wealth production and distribution. Production will be solely for use, with all people

having free access to the common store of goods and services, instead of production for sale with a view to profit.

To win workers to organise for socialism is no small task and it is easy to be demoralised or to deceive yourself that there is an easier way to initiate the new system. But there is no alternative to the hard work being carried out by the Socialist Party – whose sole aim is socialism – and the sooner those who want socialism join us, the sooner it will be achieved.

WORLD SOCIALISM NEEDS YOU

Without your support and understanding socialism cannot be achieved. If you wish to join the socialist movement, to help to bring capitalism to a speedy end, send for a membership application form or go along to your local branch.

✂

Please send me an application form and membership details (without obligation).

NAME

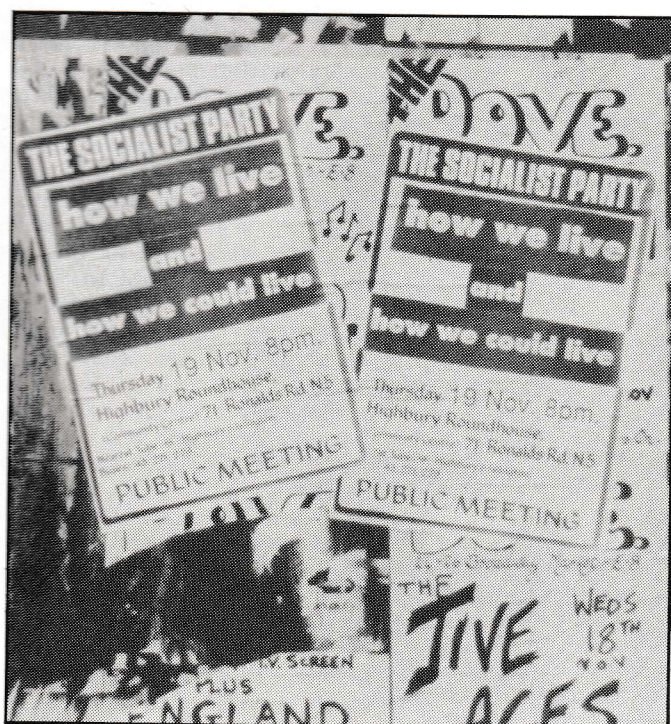
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TO: THE SOCIALIST PARTY
MEMBERSHIP DEPT
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LONDON SW4 7UN

The future for socialism



Many people on the left are bitterly disappointed. The past ninety-plus years of left-wing "successes" have left capitalism firmly in power. Labour governments did not enact socialism, but sought to reform capitalism and all too often were indistinguishable from intentionally pro-capitalist governments. The communist regimes had nothing to do with working-class power and socialism, but were monstrous tyrannies presiding over state capitalism.

Today many people on the left feel defeated. The Labour Left is marginalised and irrelevant because they are an embarrassment to the Smiths and Blairs who want their party of profit-system accountants to be just as respectable as the Tories. The Communist Party, ashamed of its Leninist past of echoing the lies of the Kremlin dictators, has given up the ghost. A few Trotskyist sects remain, spouting the old nonsense of the vanguard and insurrection—as if any workers in their right minds would follow these pastiche Bolsheviks in a new Leninist revolution.

It is quite obvious that all the old struggles of the Left have failed. But now is certainly not the time to give up on opposing capitalism. What we need is clearer thinking and more genuinely revolutionary organisation.

If ever Marx's analysis was being proved correct it is now. This is no time to cast aside Marxian analysis.

Capitalism is in a global crisis. The international market is in a condition of anarchy which is beyond the control of governments or economists. As well as the increasing poverty and mass unemployment, the system faces widespread environmental destruction, numerous nationalist wars, the growth of the racist virus, uncontrollable urban violence and the existence of huge piles of nuclear and chemical weapons which are up for grabs to the highest bidder. If this is not a system in need of total abolition, then what else is there to do with it? Reforming capitalism is a waste of time. The only way ahead is out—to a new, untried social system.

Global production for profit must be replaced by production solely for use. The ownership of society's productive resources by the super-rich minority must give way to common ownership. The dictatorship of capital, which tramples relentlessly upon human lives, must give way to democratic control. These are not new ways of running capitalism. These are ways of running a sane society without capitalism.

Now, as ever, the socialist alternative cannot be imposed by leaders or legislated for gradually by reformers. The revolutionary act of overthrowing capitalism and establishing socialism must be the conscious and democratic act of the working class: the vast majority of us who do not live on rent, interest or profits.

The Socialist Party exists to win a majority of workers for socialism. We are neither a vanguard nor a would-be government. We assert that the future belongs to the working class majority and that only world socialism offers the hope of democracy, security, comfort and dignity for all.

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Dead left and rotten right



Rarely have the political defenders of the profit system looked less savoury. The Left is all but dead, buried beneath the rubble of the Berlin Wall, the most despicable side of which they had spent their histories celebrating or apologising for in the name of socialism. The Right survives, grotesquely repeating the excesses of its past in its more extreme forms, but, more generally, diminished to the corrupt post-Thatcherite ethos of the Bingo Hall.

The Left seeks to persuade us—and itself—that it is not really dead, but lying down. Like the unemployed actor who was never much good, the Labour Left and the other impotent radicals within the capitalist parties insist that they are merely “resting”. But this is not true. All that is left of the Left is Tony Benn, destined to become a patronised elder statesman of a lost cause; Dennis Skinner, a parliamentary court jester; countless leftist sects of diminishing proportions selling meaningless newspapers mainly to each other; and Tony Cliff doing the Trotskyist music-hall circuit with increasingly implausible, incredible and embarrassing Lenin impersonations intended to inspire amongst the highly-impressionable the conviction that a British Bolshevik revolution is going to be the denouement of the Major chapter in history.

Of course, the remaining leftist believers will not give up—they will simply become less and less relevant, even to radically-minded workers, until the day will come,

not far from now, when to read the works of Lenin will be as socially eccentric as is the study of Ron Hubbard’s scientological madness now.

Irrelevant

Perhaps the most spectacular example of leftists doing what doesn’t come naturally and facing up to the historical truth is that of the Communist Party of Great Britain which simply dissolved itself in disgrace. The charmless cult members of the SWP or the RCP can be expected to enter into no such collaboration with historical reality.

The membership of the Labour Party is now more than ever made up of people who owe their jobs to Labour local authorities. The days when schoolboys in Barnsley or Leith rushed to the library to study the writings of the old reformers and then, flushed with the belief that the future was theirs to take (gradually, of course), threw themselves into the Labour Party, are long, long gone. Which schoolboy or girl of the 1990s would study the sterile thoughts of a plain John Smith or a presidential Tony Blair? And if they did they would be more likely to blush with embarrassment than perspire with enthusiasm. The nearest that Labour comes to exciting anyone are the wisecracks of Dennis Skinner. But if one-liners made a revolution Ben Elton would be head of the Fifth International.

If the Left has perished, the Right is a shadow of its former self. There was once a time when the British political right had about it a kind of political dignity; its leading lights were personally harmless old twits like Macmillan, Home and even Heath. It was possible to march in the streets against what Rab Butler or Willie Whitelaw stood for, but few felt motivated to march against them. They were only doing the traditional job of the keepers of the capitalist system, and both upbringing and temperament allowed them to perform it with what now looks like an almost quaint aristocratic remoteness.

Bingo hall ethos

The Thatcher years changed all that. Too much has been written about those ghastly times for it to be worth saying more here, but the enduring memory is that of aggressive audacity. They not only robbed workers blind, but robbed blind workers, their faces straight as they lied, their hands bloodstained as they celebrated the freedom of the jungle.

Now that capitalism is in this deep crisis which has cast to the litter bins the Eighties’ manifestoes of a property-owning democracy, the remaining advocates of the Right are characterised chiefly by the non-erasable tattoo of the estate agent; they are a shifty, witless lot. From the odious Kenneth Clarke to the wimpish Major to the lamentable Lamont to the hateful Michael

Howard, the spectacle is one of anaemic Thatcherites. Of course, socialists are never slow to stress that we are against the system and not its upholders as people, but when the upholders come to resemble so closely the image of the system it becomes almost impossible to distinguish between the body and the scabs.

The most manifest rottenness of the modern Right comes not from the ranks of the party of Maastricht, but from their supporters in the press. The smarmy Andrew Neil, editor of the *Sunday Times*, is the perfect political figure in this age of intellectual emptiness: a man with no loyalty or principle, only an unstoppable commitment to profit. The Murdochian assault upon the monarchy is not a concession to workers' distaste for unearned privilege, but the spiteful vengeance of the plebeian estate agent against those who have greater attachments to culture than to commerce.

Andrew Neil and his ilk object to snobbery because snobs quite rightly look down upon them. Richard Littlejohn, a *Sun* columnist with his own three-hour daily phone-in show on London local radio, epitomises the victory of semi-literate vulgarity over anything vaguely resembling the pursuit of knowledge. In the world of Littlejohn, just like the world of little John who became an accidental Prime Minister, there are only "good blokes" (mainly the English), "loony lefties" (anyone who is not a right-wing lout) and "scum" (the criminal legions whose growth is all because the government won't listen to the *Sun* and give them all "a good flogging").

More misery

Rarely more explicitly was all of this plain to see than in the political reactions to the James Bulger tragedy. The dying Left raised itself from its life-support machine to publish banal explanations about unemployment, Tory policies and the need for more social workers. (It is not that these points are all wrong, but why can the Left never dare to extend its vision beyond the blinkered world-view of economic determinism?) Devoid of a cogent radical

EUROPEAN ELECTIONS FUND

We would like to thank readers for contributing so far £1754 towards the cost of putting up two to three Socialist candidates in the elections to the European Parliament in June next year.

At this rate we should be able to meet our minimum target of at least £6000 well before the end of the year. So, if you want the Socialist message to be heard in these elections and you have yet to send in your contribution, it is not too late. All contributions, however small, will be gratefully acknowledged. Cheques should be made payable to "the Socialist Party of Great Britain" and sent to: Election Fund, The Socialist Party, 52 Clapham High St, London SW4 7UN.



voice, the Labour leaders simply endeavoured to outdo the Right in calling for more law and order. The sight of Tony Blair as a red-rosed cop was not pretty. Meanwhile, Clarke, the Home Secretary, spewed loutishly about "vicious little thugs" and the tabloids delighted in their favourite pastime of calling everybody "scum" (which is what in fact they seem to think that most of their readers are).

Marx spoke of capitalism becoming increasingly more miserable. He was right—it has. Its defenders have become more miserable too. They are intellectual degenerates. Just as popular culture has climbed into the pit of tasteless baseness with the cult of the new Madonna, so the politics of the deviant mind now prevails.

To enter the ranks of the Leninist left is less a wrong than an act of necrophily; to jump into bed politically with the modern Right is to flirt with the intellect, but not the body, of the tabloid-made Samantha Foxes. If there is any light out there in the hateful capitalist world it comes from the thousands—maybe millions—who know that there is something wrong and cannot believe that there is nothing better than what is on offer. They will understand what this article has been about.

STEVE COLEMAN

"If capitalism can't assure young people, with their vigour and optimism and lack of inhibition, of a stable future there must be something seriously wrong with it".

See next page for article on youth crime

Socialist Standard
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Youth crime—what's to blame?

We're talking about the possible abduction and murder of a two-year old boy. And even in the shock and bewilderment we can't be left alone. We must endure the media ghouls, the politicians and the self-styled experts on human misbehaviour telling us why it happened and how seriously social order is in peril and that we should trust them to put things to rights. a

We must put up with John Major, forgetting that he promised to be the architect of a "nation at ease with itself", advising us to understand criminals less and condemn them more. We must swallow hard Rees Mogg's censure that juvenile crime has its roots in a failure to say our prayers. When we knew what had happened to James Bulger there was an orgy of self-questioning, of doubt and condemnation. But the ghouls and the MPs and the experts were absolutely certain that none of these could refer to them. They were blameless.

The killing of James Bulger was a grisly climax to a developing campaign about youth crime. What with the "joy riders" on the bleak estates of Oxford, Liverpool and Newcastle and the persistent burglars who are too young to be legally locked away there was a popular fear that we were about to submerge beneath a tidal wave of teenage thieves and thugs. So the media bellowed out indignation, on behalf of Mr and Mrs Average Briton. The behaviour experts earned a few pounds by writing articles explaining it all as the effect of lax parents and provocative TV programmes and video games. And the politicians all acted like parliamentary thugs in the hope that thereby they could thieve a bagful of votes.

Competitive

At a time of understandably high emotion it may be difficult to cling to reality but it won't go away. The popular conception about high levels of crime is often a matter of fashion. At one time Teddy Boys were in fashion; soon they were succeeded by the Mods and Rockers. More recently it was the football hooligans; then the "joy riders". But fashions can be decided by all manner of subjective—and delusional—influences. It can develop its own momentum—which is why the popular press falls over itself to colour and glamourise crime.

Meanwhile, throughout the spasms of modish hysteria,

there have been quiet, persistent voices pointing out that the teens are the peak years for getting into trouble with the law and that this may be saying something important about what we really think of this social system. If capitalism can't assure young people, with their vigour and optimism and lack of inhibition, of a stable future there must be something seriously wrong with it.

Rather than admit the unpleasant realities of the society they try to run, the politicians have been engaged in a sordid competition to bid up the stakes in the Law and Order game. Home Secretary Kenneth Clarke had some unpleasant things to say about young offenders while he promised to set up a series of secure establishments to lock them away. John Major declared a crusade against crime—as if it can be fought—with himself, presumably, on a white charger at its head. Desperate at the prospect of the Tories picking up all the votes on the issue, Labour's Tony Blair showed that he is no slouch at the business, calling on the government to be "tough on crime, tough on the causes of crime".

Harsher

None of the ministers drew attention to the inconvenient fact that the youngsters now coming before the courts—including the two boys charged with murdering James Bulger—have spent most, if not all, of their lives under Conservative government. The



Tory party have always allowed it to be thought that they alone can be trusted to deal with—in other words, to be tough on—crime.

In their sillier moments they have come close to claiming to be able to wipe it out altogether. But what does it say for them and for their policies that after 14 years of power they are in a panic because the problem is worse than ever and are saying that harsher responses are necessary? After all, if their policies had succeeded we might now be expecting courts to feel able to be more lenient about the few minor offences before them.

And what is to be said about those harsher measures? None of them are new. They have all been tried before and they have all failed before; in fact their only perceptible effect has been to stimulate crime. The provision of secure accommodation for young offenders does not have an encouraging history; the most recent version—the Approved Schools—were often colleges of criminal education, where children quickly learned that to survive they had to be devious or obsequious or violent. They learned to burgle houses, pick pockets, steal cars more efficiently.

And in several infamous examples those children were

subject, not to the training in citizenship which Clarke huffs and puffs about but to deliberate abuse, physical and sexual. It was often summed up by the professional criminal, once ruthless but now more reflective, who would say that for him Approved School was where it all began.

Conscription

The same can be said about the Borstals, sentences to which were officially called "training". And the same, but even more so, can be said about the Detention Centres, whose "short, sharp shock" regime was so rapturously greeted by the punitive neurotics of the Tory Party.

The policy of the Detention Centres was based on the assumption that by bullying and repressing youngsters who had often been subjected to that kind of treatment all their lives anyway, it was possible to persuade them not to bully and repress others. They were doomed to failure although after being abandoned in the 1970s they were briefly revived by an embattled Willie Whitelaw before being quietly allowed to expire.

So what else is on offer, to repress, discipline or "treat"

the young criminal? Well, there has been the predictable demand to bring back conscription, often from men who are stupid enough to be able to filter out the truth of their own memories of National Service. Conscription, they declare over their beer in the local British Legion, would instil respect for authority, discipline, order, cleanliness, short hair and sharply pressed trousers . . .

Leaving aside the fact that the armed forces are not famous for decorous, considerate and law-abiding behaviour, we should bear in mind that when

peace-time conscription operated in this country it was often said to be responsible for crime. The post-war crime wave was widely explained as the response of school leavers, knowing that in a few years they would be forced into a mindless existence of square bashing and spit and polish, lacking any ambition other than to be the best burglar in the street.

If there is any evidence about cause and effect of crime it clearly contradicts the theory that harsh punishment persuades people to be law-abiding. Perhaps that has

something to do with the fact that capitalist society has a selective policy on what is lawful and what is not. Some theft and violence is not only allowed but actually esteemed and rewarded—as any investor should know, as any soldier should know. In such a social system it has to be expected that people will be confused about what is legal and what is outlawed—what is “right” and what is “wrong”.

In the sacred name of profit capitalism murders millions of people every year, in its wars, its famines, through its unnecessary disease. None of this

is illegal. Meanwhile, the leaders of this historical horror concentrate on trying the impossible—making the system work without its inevitable problems.

Crime cannot be abolished, any more than the problems which capitalism must produce can be abolished—unless something is done about changing the basis of society. Through the hysteria generated by the death of poor little James Bulger, that is a central fact which must not be lost sight of.

IVAN

Who abuses who?

Suffer the Little Children by Dr DHS Read. Medical Institute for Research into Children Cruelty, Step Rock House, St Andrews, Fife, Scotland, KY16 9AT. £15.00.

On a cold morning in February 1991 police and social workers invaded the Isles of Orkney. These pre-dawn raids, unlike those carried out by the Vikings over 1000 years earlier, though similar in that the perpetrators had the element of surprise, were carefully planned and synchronized.

Seven homes were forcibly entered and searched, and 9 children aged between 8 and 15 years were removed in a matter of minutes. For those who were to live through the following nightmare it might have seemed as if history was repeating itself. Not only was there the Viking analogy, but the events resembled in many ways the witch-hunts of the 16th and 17th centuries that also visited the islands. Indeed, witchcraft, or rather the satanic abuse of children, was what the parents and friends of the 9 children were alleged to have perpetrated.

Dr Reid's book is a careful study of what followed in the Orkney Child Abuse Scandal, revealing much that was suppressed by child care “experts” and the media. Many pages are given over to what an advert for the book describes as “how social workers—police—the medical profession and the law courts combine to destroy innocent families in child abuse allegations”.

The recent industry in child abuse allegations is traced

back to the late 1960s when:

under the benevolent torpitude or turpitude of a Labour government, which forgot that it should protect the weak against the strong, and not the other way around, the public bureaucracies in Britain developed a life and momentum of their own. The bosses in local government, in the health service, social services and other publicly funded bodies, decided that it was time that their powers were increase.

The Social Work (Scotland) Act 1968 and the Children's and Young Persons Act 1969 greatly increased the powers of social workers to take children into care “on the flimsiest of grounds”. The result being that there has been in excess of 50 inquiries into child abuse disasters since 1970. There was only one such inquiry before this date.

Among the hundreds of sources Dr Reid uses is an article from the *Daily Telegraph Magazine* of 11 January 1991:

What organisation does the following, the Stasi before 1990 or the social work child care system today in Britain?

1. Takes people into custody without warning at any time of the day or night.
2. Opens, copies and even confiscates their post. Denies them rights.
3. Keeps surveillance of more than 4 million people.
4. Has a network of informers.
5. Depends on loyalty to the system, from self-in-

terest. And is a State within a State.

6. Is expanding at a phenomenal rate at vast cost.

7. Has no statutory provision governing or constraining some of its powers, apart from guidelines.

8. Threatens those who disagree with it.

9. Ruins many lives.

10. Says, when things go wrong: “What could I have done differently?”.

“The answer”, says Dr Reid, “is both”. And much evidence is presented to corroborate the parallel.

The book goes on to reveal one of the great contradictions when it comes to child law, which is basically that in spite of so much legislation on the subject, the child has in fact few, if any, legal rights once in the custody of the social services.

A child taken into care by social workers is compared with a criminal in police custody. Whereas the prisoner has the right to remain silent, the right to legal representation, access to a telephone, uncensored mail and contact with family, the child has no rights.

Social workers have become very dependent on “Disclosure Sessions”, so much so that the entire case for the social services in the Orkney Child Abuse Scandal rested on “evidence” extracted at them. “Disclosure Sessions”, as Dr Reid points out more than once, “involve constant repeated interviews with children in which suggestions are made to children by social workers or others until the

child agrees with the professional worker . . . a form of intellectual rape”.

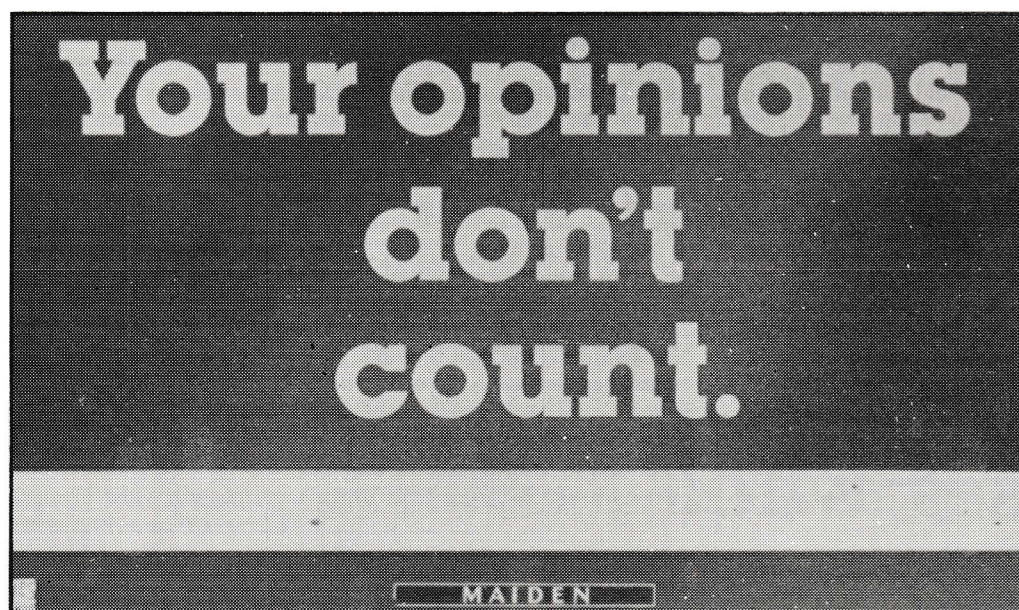
It does not matter that the child may not have been abused, nor that the parent alleged to have committed the act may be by now suicidal. The skilled social worker will, without fail, extract evidence of abuse, and “how much more might a child agree to errors and fantasies when suddenly wrenched from his or her home environment and told that he or she will not be allowed home until he or she agrees to the story told by the inquisitor”.

There are those who maintain that children always tell the truth and cannot be made to tell lies. Dr Reid shatters this argument with plain fact. The Birmingham Six and the Guildford Four, men not children, confessed to crimes they did not commit. If the well-known television presenter Stuart Hall can “admit within ten minutes of a police interview to a theft he had not carried out then we cannot expect a child to be more resistant to manipulation”.

And so the book continues. Not a stone is left unturned and no body connected with the State-established Child Abuse industry escapes criticism. That the book ends with pointers as to how to reform the system along the lines of the “Dutch model”, and does not consider the capitalist social system we are conditioned to live in, does not distract from its excellence.

JOHN BISSETT

Market leader



Has it ever appeared to you that in this revered "democracy" of ours, despite the efforts of successive governments over the decades, the politicians who claim to have the solutions to the country's problems are just fumbling in the dark? Has it occurred to you that no matter what supposedly new schemes the power-brokers dream up and sell us like a new brand of detergent, the social and economic ills which afflict our lives seem to remain with a tenacity rivalled only by Jeremy Beadle's attempts to embarrass the entire population before his retirement?

If your answer to these questions is yes, then rest assured that you are not the first to have serious doubts about the merits of our so-called democratic system of government. It is not uncommon to find yourself exasperated at the fact that nothing really changes, regardless of which band of political incompetents has lately deceived the electorate into handing over its decision-making power.

After all, haven't we been consistently assured that eventually abhorrences such as poverty, inequality and war will become merely topics for the history books? And yet we still find the politicians continuing to grapple with the problems which our grandparents hoped would have long been consigned to memory by the time their grandchildren had reached maturity. Not an un-

reasonable aspiration when you consider what an intelligent and co-operative species human beings can be.

Disturbing reality

The disturbing reality is that here we are, seven years shy of the millenium, on the brink of what many a science fiction writer has dreamed would be a fantastic age of unity, enlightenment and space travel, and human existence continues to breed conflict and despair. How could this have been allowed to happen, when in most parts of the developed world, we the people have the power to select the representatives ostensibly best able to tackle the corrosive features of our society?

Surprisingly, the answer to this question is terrifyingly elementary. The truth is that no democratically-elected representative anywhere in the world, no matter how well-intentioned or altruistic he or she may be, has any real power to improve the lot of the majority of people, the working class. Many idealists have boldly entered the world of politics with commendable notions about changing society for the better or serving their fellow men, but on becoming elected they discover that their plans are foiled by an uniquely ascendant and irresistible governor—the market.

Let there be no delusions; everything related to the daily running of a national or local economy, whether it be production of food, social services, health care or employment, is dominated by the intransigent demands of the market system. Despite the fact that the world is now capable of producing more than enough food, clothing and shelter to serve the needs of all its inhabitants, and technology has provided the potential for a quality of life for all unimaginable a century ago, the politician finds at every turn in the economic labyrinth yet another barrier erected by the market. Nevertheless the market, though possessed of absolute authority over our lives, never has to face election by the people it governs. It is a dictator of the most pervasive nature, without integrity or conscience.

The evidence for this contention is not difficult to find; you need only to switch on the radio or television or pick up today's paper. There we see and hear stories of miners losing their jobs while there are still vast reserves of coal left underground; we hear of hospitals turning away patients because their budgets have been exhausted before the end of the financial year; we hear the prime minister blaming lack of "demand" in the economy for the rising numbers of unemployed, and yet there are millions in need and millions idle who are prepared to pro-

duce the goods to meet those needs.

Although passionate believers in the democratic principle, socialists refuse to give their votes in an election to any candidate other than another socialist. Even the so-called socialists of the British Labour Party are merely attempting to ameliorate the capitalist system by endeavouring to reform some of its more objectionable attributes. You will never hear a Labour politician advocate the complete overthrow of capitalism. Socialists maintain that (unless of course there is a genuine Socialist candidate) workers have no real choice when confronted by a ballot paper: whoever they vote for on election day, the result is the same—government by the market.

Beyond the market

As the worst recession since the 1930s drags on, an encouraging phenomenon has germinated in several parts of the country, started by small groups of workers disillusioned with the money exchange system. Necessitated by the severely limited budgets of the unemployed and low-paid, small bartering networks have been set up with their own currencies in order to allow the exchange of goods and services without the use of cash. Although these "local exchange trading schemes" are in essence just another form of exchange and therefore not an alternative to the market system, they do demonstrate that some workers are now questioning the ethos of the capitalist system and are attempting to exercise some control over their own lives:

Dr Michael Hodges, lecturer in international affairs at the London School of Economics, sees the proliferation of such schemes as the result of a loss of faith in governments to control the global economy (*Observer*, 17 January).

While socialists do not advocate the idea of bartering as an alternative to the market system, we are nevertheless in-

interested in examples of workers coming to understand that they are capable of organizing their own community rather than subjecting themselves to the ineptitude of incompetent politicians. It proves that we are not isolated in our refusal to accept that the prevailing economic system is immutable.

In a rationally organized society there could not be the mind-boggling anomalies of the sort that are endemic under capitalism, such as millions starving to death while food is stockpiled because it can't be sold at a profit, or ever-increasing numbers of homeless people while construction workers are forced into idleness; there would not be a waste of vast resources on weapons research and manufacture while the infirm suffer for want of rudimentary medicines and health care. In a sane world there would be no market to dictate that only those with "purchasing power" may have access to what they need, because there would be free access to goods and services for all.

We have it in our power to conceive a new order in which all people have real control over their own lives, the power to forge a true democracy where wealth is shared amongst the population of equals and not monopolized by a privileged minority. When the day comes in which the majority of workers decide that enough is enough, that the oppression of the wealth-producers has prevailed for long enough, then and only then will the market system face the scrutiny of the masses in the greatest "election" in history.

On that day it won't be the vacuous grin of the latest Tory or Labour prime minister which greets us on our television screens, nor the platitudes of the newest president or chancellor. When socialism is finally established there will be a worldwide awakening to the dawn of a consciousness which will transport humanity from the desolate age of disillusionment and insecurity to a new era of unity and understanding.

NICK BRUNSKILL

Trade wars

At a recent meeting at the White House, President Clinton promised John Major that he would "try to make the GATT accord succeed" (*Financial Times*, 25 February). Subsequently, however, both he and his Secretary of State, Warren Christopher, were less conciliatory in their pronouncements.

Speaking to students at Washington University, Clinton said "we will say to our trading partners that we value their business, but none of us should expect something for nothing". Warren Christopher, addressing NATO foreign ministers, referred to "a new diplomacy that views domestic and foreign issues as inseparable. We will elevate US economic security as our primary foreign policy goal" (*Daily Telegraph*, 27 February).

The North America Free Trade Agreement, the supposed US answer to the European trade bloc, has resulted, however, in the use of cheap labour in Mexico by American industrial manufacturing companies with resultant lay-offs in the corresponding industries in the US.

The United States is constantly calling for a "level playing field" with the other major capitalist powers. This ignores the fact that America has imposed import duties on steel, wine and cereals. The volume of US exports abroad expanded by 74 percent between 1985 and the first quarter of 1992, compared to increases in German exports of 28 percent and those of Japan by less than 20 percent (*Financial Times*, 10 February). So the "cooperation" that Clinton and Christopher are demanding is really a greater share of the world market.

Barriers

In Europe the promises of prosperity based on an expansion of trade with the former Eastern Bloc countries has given way to the worst recession of the post-war period. Nor has the German economic miracle that was to follow the unification of the two former German states materialised. Instead, Europe now has in-

creasingly bitter internal conflicts over jobs, trade, currencies and interest rates. The volatility of the two latter is indicative of the failure of the larger market to produce convergence or stability.

The average level of unemployment in Europe has risen to 10 percent. Recently 7000 German steel workers demonstrated against proposed job cuts. Car manufacturers in western Europe have drastically cut costs by restructuring plants and laying off workers. Far from stimulating trade, the EEC has put up barriers, particularly to countries such as Poland and the former Czechoslovak Republic whose labour costs are lower (hourly rates for car workers are about one tenth of those of western German workers). Exports to the EEC from the former Eastern Bloc countries have increased to 19 percent during the past half-year. Czech exports to the EC alone rose 10 percent last year to 51 percent of the new regime's total exports. Restrictions on textiles, farm products and cement imports already exist and it is anticipated that these measures will shortly be extended to steel products from Hungary, Poland and Slovakia.

Western capitalist politicians who welcomed the break of the eastern European states with the Soviet Bloc as a triumph for democratic

capitalism which would lead to an economic boom are now erecting a reverse version of the Berlin Wall by creating trade barriers.

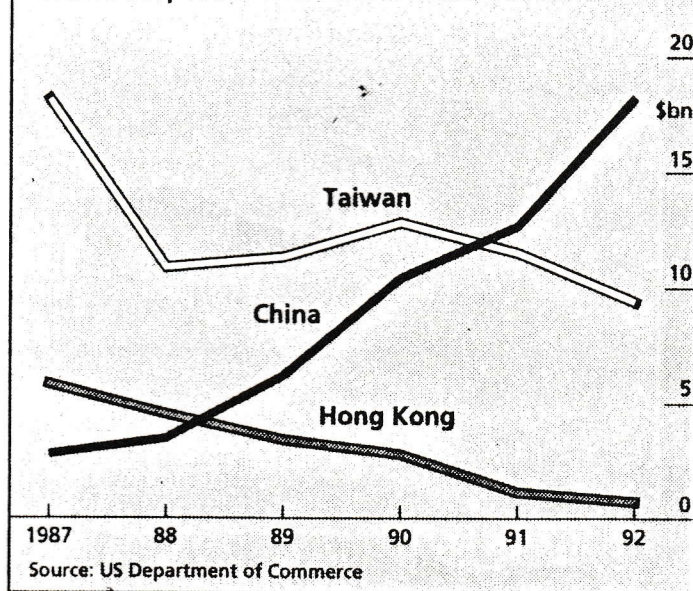
Japan and China

Japan, a country involved in a worsening slump, is frequently the object of exhortation by American spokesmen to lower its trade barriers on industrial goods as well as rice imports. Industrial production is falling, bad debts are increasing rapidly as property values continue to slide whilst banks struggle with at least 100 billion dollars of doubtful loans. For a country in this position to lower import barriers so as to admit manufactured goods could only worsen a rapidly-deteriorating situation. Domestic sales of cars fell by 7.2 percent in 1991. Importing Fords and Chryslers will hardly mitigate the problem. Against this background Japan can offer a market for little else than Japanese goods. As an export-dependent country to an extent greater than its rivals, Japan has no alternative other than to struggle for an outlet for Japanese manufactured goods.

One country whose production is rising rapidly is China

Chinese excess

Trade surpluses with the United States



which is already beginning to seek an outlet for its manufactured goods on the world market. As it is, China's exports to the United States are rising and this is causing tension:

The Americans have made it clear that GATT membership for China will not lay to rest the provisions of America's own laws that make China's most-favoured nation (MFN) status a perennial subject of dispute. The Clinton administration's China policy is still unformed, but it seems likely that human rights, Chinese arms sales and China's huge trade surplus with the United States (more than \$18 billion last year) will all crop up yet again in this year's MFN debate. (*Economist*, 6 March).

Already the US trade negotiator Douglas Newkirk has gone on record as saying that "China and America are

further apart now than they were before the talks were broken off in 1989".

What we are witnessing is the division of the world into rival trade blocs where the major powers are following the "beggar thy neighbour policies" of the 1930s. Far from stimulating world trade this can slow it down drastically. All the high-sounding phrases such as "free trade" and "cooperation" are merely attempts to dress in respectable language the struggle of the various capitalist powers to grab a bigger share of the world's markets.

Many observers have drawn parallels between the present world economic crisis and the Great Depression of the 1930s. The *Wall Street Journal* (15 February) recalled that Cordell Hull, United States Secretary of State under Franklin D. Roosevelt, had said in 1937 "I have never faltered and will never falter, in my belief that enduring world peace and the

welfare of nations are indissolubly connected with friendliness, fairness, equality and the maximum practicable degree of freedom in world trade". Thus the same nebulous phraseology was being used then as the modern politicians are using now. One other more significant quote is attributed to Hull in the same article, and is said to be heard nowadays in the corridors of GATT headquarters in Geneva, "that when goods don't cross frontiers armies do". War commenced in Europe two years later.

The present crisis and trade war exemplify the anachronistic nature of capitalism in terms of social development. Marx saw the contradiction clearly:

The enormous power, inherent in the factory system, of expanding by jumps, and the dependence of that system on the markets of the world, necessarily beget

feverish production, followed by over-filling of the markets, whereupon contraction of the markets brings on crippling of production. The life of modern industry becomes a series of periods of moderate activity, prosperity, over-production, crisis and stagnation . . . Except in the periods of prosperity, there rages between the capitalists the most furious combat for the share of each in the markets. (*Capital* Vol.I, chapter 15, section 7)

The present trade war cannot be ended by GATT, NAFTA or G7 summits. It will continue in one form or another as long as world production is organized to produce primarily for profit rather than use. The present mode of production can no more function without trade conflicts than it can without world slumps as we have today.

T.L.

Virtual reality

"Virtual reality won't merely replace television. It will eat it alive". That is the aggressive prediction of Arthur C. Clarke, the science fiction writer. But what is virtual reality (VR) and why should we be concerned about it?

VR is in its infancy so there isn't any general agreement about what it consists of or how fast and in what ways it will grow. Historians of the technology trace its origins back a century or so, to the first explorations of the principle of stereoscopy, or three-dimensional vision. Some decades ago cinema audiences were introduced to 3-D viewing of films, but the novelty didn't catch on and wasn't developed. In the last decade or so VR has come on the scene in the USA. It has done so in the form of a computer-generated apparent, or virtual, world.

Like many inventions developed in capitalist society, VR benefitted from its military applications. This is how a writer in *Business Week* (5 October 1992) described a simulation at the Pentagon's Defense Advanced Research Projects Agency:

Instantly, you're transported inside a tank rolling across the Iraqi desert. You are performing the same maneuvers as a unit . . . in the Persian Gulf war. The graphics on the screens are only video-game quality. Yet the illusion works. You duck as shells scream toward you and explode in ear-splitting fury.

That simulation was achieved by three five-foot screens. A more advanced form

of VR is projections on stereoscopic lenses moulded inside helmets that participants wear. Multiple sensory information is conveyed. In some systems, a viewer wearing a sensor-laden glove manipulates objects in the computer. In others, images on the screen or a viewer's perspective are manipulated with a mouse or joystick. Howard Rheingold, in his book *Virtual Reality* sums it up:



A virtual world is a computer that you operate with natural gestures, not by composing computer programmes, but by walking around, looking around, and using your hands to manipulate objects.

VR is a technology, that is, an applied science or way of achieving certain physical ends. Socialists are interested in technology from three different perspectives: as part of a critique of capitalism, as part of the case for socialism, and (controversially) as a feature of socialist society. These three perspectives will be considered one by one, although over time they may be seen as making up a single socialist perspective on the world.

Distorted technology

Technology is used by capitalism mainly to make more profits for the few rather than to improve conditions of life for the many. The extraction of surplus value from workers has been possible since they were first compelled to sell their labour to owners of capital (employers). In the early days of capitalism, productivity was low because there were few machines, or only primitive machines, to make labour more productive. As capitalism developed, the process of exploitation remained essentially the same, but the means of wealth production and distribution became vastly more efficient. The wealth produced is grossly un-

equally distributed, both between nations and between rich and poor in each nation. And more goods and technological developments sometime have calamitous effects: cars and planes that crash, thalidomide children, nuclear power station disasters, oil tanker spillages, among many others.

VR is a typical example of the way capitalism distorts the development of a technology that has great potential for enhancing the quality of life. So far, most of the development has been for military purposes. Rheingold confidently predicts that "the two largest blocs of users of new information and communication technology in the 1990s will be the global finance and global entertainment industries". VR might become as addictive, energy-sapping and intelligence-dulling as television, the "plug-in drug" which now requires the average abuser to consume seven hours a day.

Part of the case for socialism is that technology can be used directly for need-meeting and not profit-making purposes. Even with capitalism, technology can and is being used for life-enhancing as well as life-harming purposes—medical technology that saves lives (often after other technologies have imperilled them), environmental measures that increase crops rather than poison them, machines that reduce drudgery rather than killing or maiming workers. Socialism would mean using technology only for human purposes, not

balancing those purposes against the pursuit of profit.

The electronic media—of which VR is the latest development—have been used thus far by a few to manipulate the desires of the many, resulting in huge profits for the successful entrepreneurs. With socialism, the really life-enhancing potentialities of VR can be developed, and the capitalist uses put in the history box alongside Cineraama.

Democratic control

With the establishment of socialism, democratic decisions can be made about the appropriate levels and types of technology to meet different needs in different environments. It is utopian in the bad sense to try to predict the future in any detail, except perhaps for fun. But we do need some general principles, today, to help us move towards more detailed principles and their application tomorrow. Marx quite sensibly refused to "write recipes for future cookshops", but Morris envisaged a basically simple, low technology socialist society in *News From Nowhere*. Socialists this century have from time to time shown interest in the subject. In the 1950s some Socialist Party members expressed views generally sympathetic to a Morris-type

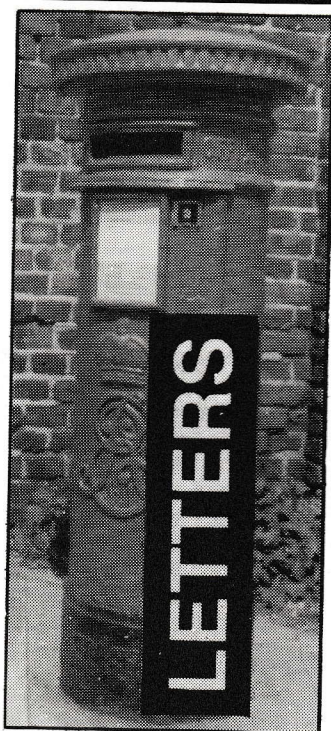
socialist future, though with a critical reaction from most other members who felt there were advantages in retaining at least some hi-tech methods of production and distribution.

At this stage we can only speculate on how and to what extent socialist society will use VR or whatever future refinements of it may be invented. We can say with certainty that, since there will be no buying and selling and no rival nation states to prepare for and engage in war, VR will not be used for business or military purposes.

Three probable areas of VR application may be summarized as medical, industrial and political. The minimal physical activity required to participate in VR may enable the minds of severely physically disabled people to be liberated from the prisons of their bodies. Much work that is now tedious could be made more interesting by simulated realities that enable technical problems to be solved more easily.

The political applications are perhaps the most challenging. Electronic media have so far been controlled by capitalist government and business, whose electors and customers have been mere listeners or viewers. VR experts like to talk of "participants", and there is scope for interaction between the providers of the virtual worlds and those who experience them. The technology will be there for people in socialist society to use for democratically-decided purposes.

SRP



Myth

Dear Editors,

Watching a demonstration of predominantly young people parading a banner which reads "Alexander the Great was Greek, not Slav!" I ask myself why it is that my

own generation, the youth of today, are just as foolishly willing to throw away their lives for their various national masters as were those before them. It seems that whenever death is on the agenda there are always those to be found eager and willing. Hardly surprising, perhaps, when one considers what daily life under capitalism entails.

Of course, nationalism derives its energy not just from poverty, but from the ignorance that is engendered by the profit system, where most of us have no real stake in life and hence no incentive to dip into history and find out things which might strip our capitalist nation-state society of its pretended legitimacy.

In fact, Alexander "the Great" (the inverted commas to underline the fact that military heroes are not my heroes!) was neither Greek nor Slav, but if anything, he was definitely the enemy of the Greeks more than of anyone else.

Alexander was the son of Philip of Macedon, a kingdom to the north of the Greek city-states, and whose warriors had swept over Greece after the fratricidal war between Athens and Sparta. The oppression suffered by the Greek city-states at the hands of Philip and Alexander (Thebes was razed to the ground for daring

to challenge Alexander's tyranny) was such that the Greeks were eventually obliged to call on the Roman Republic for assistance in ousting the Macedonians.

What any schoolboy with the slightest classical education ought to know is apparently unknown to the nationalists who are only eager to die for what they call "Macedonia", on one side or another, since the name hit the papers. But then, as nationalism is irrational in any case, historical awareness and understanding

can only take cover when it is time for fools to start shooting:

A colored rag borne above troops and hoisted on forts and ships. It appears to serve the same purpose as certain signs that one sees on vacant lots in London—"Rubbish may be shot here." (definition of "flag" in *The Devil's Dictionary* by Ambrose Bierce).

A. J. K. WALKER
Bournemouth

City violence

Dear Editors,

I thought double standards and muddled thinking were the prerogative of the press and media but Dave Clark of Class War appears even more muddle-headed with his references to "anti-fascist violence". Presumably, by his reckoning, the bombing of Dresden and other German cities were acts of anti-fascist violence.

Some may recall the annual "Stop the City" campaign of a few years ago which of course did nothing of the sort as the City is still there if not flourish-

ing. At the time of these demonstrations I was working in a stockbroker's office when a bunch of mindless idiots lobbed a heavy lump of wood through a window, though luckily no-one was injured. I would ask Dave Clark what this or any other act of violence achieved. Violence of whatever kind has never solved anything witness two world wars and the mindless cold-blooded murder taking place almost daily in Northern Ireland.

DENHAM FORD
Westcliffe-on-Sea, Essex

The second coming of Keynes

Fanning the flames of the current resurgence in Keynesian economic thought is the second and most relevant book in Lord Skidelsky's three-part biography of John Maynard Keynes. *John Maynard Keynes—The Economist As Saviour 1920–37* (MacMillan, 1992, £20) covers the period when Keynes's most influential and original work was undertaken.

Its subtitle is appropriate enough, for it was in this period that Keynes effectively manoeuvred himself into the dubious position of being seen as the saviour of capitalism. It was certainly a time in which capitalism seemed to need a new saviour, for as the economy dipped in the early 1930s, so did the reputations of the orthodox and dominant capitalist economists like Marshall and Pigou, who had thought a major world slump unlikely.

Law of markets

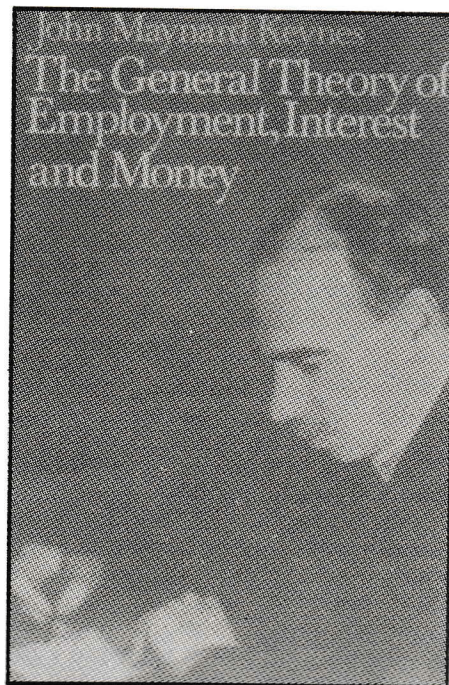
To these economists—dubbed the “classical school” by Keynes—“Say's Law” that every seller brings a buyer to market largely held true. Unemployment in the capitalist economy was considered by them to be a essentially transient phenomenon caused principally by temporary and isolated overproduction in certain spheres of industry that did not become generalized, or by wage inflexibility promoted by trade union power. Any long-term unemployment, they thought, could be eradicated through adjustments to real wages.

Keynes, in his *General Theory of Employment, Interest and Money* (1936), was the first capitalist economist to mount a serious challenge to these views and in so doing developed a theory which he claimed could save capitalism from itself and from the economists who had failed to understand it. As Skidelsky puts it:

All these [economists], Keynes said, lacked a theory of effective demand, the fatal flaw in the system, he pointed out, lay in the variability of spending relative to earnings; and this was rooted in the use, and purposes, of money. The result was that the market system was liable to collapse into prolonged depression. If the logical flaw in classical reasoning which “proved” this was impossible could be corrected, and communities induced by policy to consume what they can produce, the existing system could be saved. (p. 484)

Keynes's discovery of the “logical flaw” in the classical economists' arguments—Say's Law of markets—was not, however, as revolutionary as Keynes and many of his followers contended. Seventy years earlier Marx had commented that:

Nothing could be more foolish than the dogma that because every sale is a purchase, and every purchase a sale, the circulation of commodities necessarily implies



an equilibrium between sales and purchases . . . its real intention is to show that every seller brings his own buyer to market with him . . . But no-one directly needs to purchase because they have just sold. (*Capital*, Vol. I, chapter 3, section 2a).

Moreover, the theory of effective aggregate demand developed by Keynes was itself deficient and led his own key arguments against Say's Law being rooted in underconsumptionist economic thought. Keynes argued that saving constitutes a subtraction from aggregate demand, and that as capitalism proceeds to concentrate more and more wealth into fewer hands, it would be imperilled by the increasing inability of the rich to consume or directly invest all of their wealth.

A good deal of the policy carried out in Keynes's name by governments wishing to avert slumps has centered on attempts to revive aggregate demand by reducing the incentive to hoard and save wealth and by redistributing income to those sectors of society most likely to spend it. It has never worked, precisely because serious attempts at doing this imperil the very profit-accruing sectors which the capitalist economy finds necessary for its further expansion. This was classically the case with the last British Labour government from 1974–6 when unemployment more than doubled despite concerted intervention on Keynesian lines.

Currency crank

If Keynes's legacy on the trade cycle and the nature of effective demand in the capitalist economy has been, at best, mixed, much of Skidelsky's book is spent

outlining the genesis of his thought on the one area where he was more muddled still—monetary matters. In his *Tract On Monetary Reform* (1923) and in the *Report of the MacMillan Committee on Finance and Industry* (1931) which he helped draft, Keynes outlined the spurious “credit creation” theory which can even now be found in most modern economics textbooks. Keynes's argument was that banks could create multiples of credit, and hence new deposits, from a given initial deposit base, and by so doing, add to purchasing power.

The justifications advanced by Keynes and the MacMillan Committee for the credit creationist view were entirely bogus and rested on an ideal model of a banking system that was very far removed from actual banking practice. In their simple model of a banking system only one bank existed. Into this bank a depositor came along and deposited £1,000 in cash. Operating with a ten percent cash reserve ratio, the bank then lent out £900 which was withdrawn by cheque, only to come back to the same bank as a new deposit. After this transaction, the deposits in the bank totalled £1,900 made up of the initial £1,000 plus the later cheque deposit of £900. Against this liability, the bank had assets of £1,000 cash and £900 owed to it by customers.

Keynes and the MacMillan Committee alleged that this process could be repeated nine more times with a ten percent cash reserve, so that the bank's books would eventually show £10,000 in deposits balanced by the £1,000 cash together with £9,000 in loans owed by borrowers. Therefore, from an initial £1,000 cash deposit base, the bank had “created” £9,000 of credit, granted as new deposits.

Keynes's theory was entirely spurious because in the real world of capitalism this cannot happen. The assumption of a one-bank financial system is totally unrealistic, as is the assumption that the only money to be withdrawn from the bank's accounts would be by cheque. Although Keynes and the MacMillan Committee assumed a ten percent cash reserve, they also assumed that in practice this cash reserve would never be called upon by depositors. They took it for granted that the initial £1,000 cash deposit remained entirely unchanged throughout the whole series of transactions, a totally unrealistic proposition by anybody's standards.

Price level

Keynes's incorrect views on credit creationism led him to make a number of equally absurd contentions about other monetary matters. Foremost among these was the idea that the banks, because of their ability to create purchasing power, effectively determine the price level. This is what Keynes argued in his *Tract On Monetary Reform*:

The initial price level is mainly determined by the amount of credit created by the banks . . . the amount of credit, so created, is in turn roughly measured by the volume of the banks' deposits. (p. 178).

In recent years this view has largely been taken up by the so-called "monetarists" and has periodically been the view held by Conservative governments since 1979. To them, as for Keynes, notes and coins are only the insignificant "small change of the monetary system", with the money supply consisting predominantly of bank deposits supposedly "created" by the actions of the banks themselves. Because of this view a smokescreen has arisen whereby the real cause of the persistent rise in prices since the beginning of the Second World War has been obscured—that is, the policy of successive governments of issuing an excess of inconvertible paper currency in the vain hope that its effects would be only beneficial to the economy as a whole.

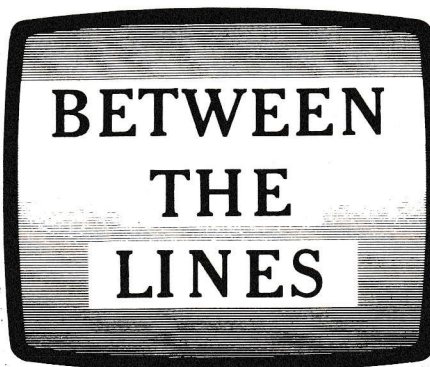
In his book Skidelsky makes it clear that the principal opponent of credit creationism and its related fallacies within the realms of capitalist economics was Professor Edwin Cannan of the London School of Economics (who Skidelsky erroneously says regarded himself as a socialist). Cannan correctly contended that banks can "create" nothing and do not determine the price level, being only intermediaries in the financial process who lend out sums of money that have been deposited with them at higher rates of interest than they pay to depositors to attract money in.

Unfortunately, Skidelsky does not acknowledge the sustained opposition mounted by the Socialist Party to the credit creationist viewpoint—virtually alone among all the political parties in Britain and an opposition underpinned by the Marxian proposition that wealth can only arise through production and not via the process of circulation. Nor, in accepting the general Keynesian outlook on effective demand, unemployment, inflation and credit, does he show any awareness of why the "second coming" of Keynes is unlikely to be any more successful than the first. Skidelsky and others should note that the working class has experienced Keynesian failure before, and we don't want or need a repeat performance.

DAP

BACK NUMBERS

Back numbers of the *Socialist Standard* for the early 1980s are available from Head Office free on request. Back copies of the *Western Socialist*, published by the World Socialist Party of the US, are available on the same terms. Orders should be sent to: The Socialist Party, 52 Clapham High St, London SW4 7UN. A contribution to the postage cost would be appreciated.



BEYOND THE HYPE

It seemed almost impossible to switch on the TV without hearing someone talking about Malcolm X. On Monday 1 March Channel 4 showed *Nine Songs For Malcolm X*; the same night Darcus Howe on *Devil's Advocate* examined the historical legacy of Malcolm X; on Thursday 4 March Oprah Winfrey interviewed Spike Lee, the director of *Malcolm X*, the three-and-a-half-hour, \$35-million-dollar film; the same night *The Late Show* had one of its painfully pretentious studio discussions about Malcolm X; on Saturday, 6 March *Moving Pictures* considered Malcolm X. And the month was only a week old. Thirty-five million dollars evidently is enough to buy a man a place in history.

In all of the discussion one question remained unaddressed: Was Malcolm X a racist? Yes, he was. He was a mob orator who spoke about "the blue-eyed white devil" as "a race of two-legged white dogs". It was Malcolm X who said of whites, "We don't want to integrate with that old pale thing . . . The dog is their closest relative. They got the same kind of hair, the same kind of skin, and the same kind of smell". These views were never retracted, not once disowned. Spike Lee told Oprah Winfrey that in making the film he consulted closely with a man he called "Minister Farrakhan". Ironically, Farrakhan was one of the so-called Muslim Brothers who helped betray Malcolm X to his murderers, but, more importantly, this is the same anti-semitic, fascist black nationalist, Louis Farrakhan, whose speeches and writings have done so much to divert black anger towards hatred and violence.

The white liberal taboo against mentioning racism when it comes from a black rabble-rouser will not be accepted by socialists. Malcolm X was a racist whose main legacy is in the realm of Black Power separatism as preached by Farrakhan and other modern racists; as such he was nothing but an enemy of wage-slaves, both black and white (the labels are themselves racist).

We can recognize the appeal of anti-white racism amongst impoverished wage-slaves who lives were even more stunted than they might be by the prejudices of American racist culture—we recognize it but we are hostile to those who exploit such political appeal, just as we are hos-

TAPES

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tile to the racism of the white supremacists. We recognize also that Malcolm X appeared to change his mind about some of his most venomous views in the last year of his life. But why did he change? Not because he came to reject the religious confusion of Islam or because he accepted class rather than race as the main social division. He changed because he was involved in a sordid leadership battle within The Nation of Islam movement and his one-time fellow leaders were trying to take his house away from him and eventually sought to kill him.

The bullet which murdered Malcolm X came from a gun which he had ideologically loaded. His legacy to black workers today is a force for reaction, not advance. Indeed, whatever criticisms socialists must express in relation to the Christianity of Martin Luther King, there is no doubt that his message of peaceful resistance to oppression and the necessity of gaining democratic opportunities was far more successful and interesting than anything which Malcolm X ever said. The X logos which have been so persistently upon our TV screens might well be seen as the symbols of the politically illiterate. It is to be hoped that Malcolm X's \$35-million publicity hype will last no longer than last year's craze for turtles.

WHO'S BEING SCREWED?

Roger Graef's three-part documentary series, *Turning the Screws* (C4, 9 pm, finished 4 March) was supposed to be about the lives of prison screws, but very rarely touched on the subject. Its main theme was the battle between the Prison Officers Association, the screws' union, at Wandsworth prison, and the extraordinarily disagreeable prison governor, a man who bore an uncanny resemblance to one of those Nazi POW camp commandants in an old black-and-white film.

The governor was determined to push through new employment conditions which would make life harder for the screws. The POA committee was determined to resist. This was a documentary about the class struggle. And the war-like character of that struggle became all too clear as we saw just how cunningly the two sides pursued the battle.

The ironies were inescapable. Firstly, here were prison guards being seen as militant trade unionists. So much for the left-wing nonsense about police and soldiers and screws being incapable of thinking about their class position. Secondly, as screws who spend much of their time doing some pretty nasty things to their fellow workers, do we want to offer them our sympathy? Workers in their cells might think differently.

Thirdly, it was evident from the series just how much the life of the screws mirrored that of the inmates. They are both workers stuck in prisons, even though the screws are allowed out for a few hours a day. But most ironically of all, the series depicted with great clarity the economic prison of The Wages System. However well-organized workers are in the battle over wages and conditions (and the trade unionists in the series were no fools), the most that can be achieved is re-arrangement of the terms of exploitation, a re-shuffling of the furniture in the prison cell. Only the abolition of the wages system will bring about real liberation. That is something which the followers of Malcolm X and the militant screws have yet to learn.

STEVE COLEMAN

What's On

LONDON

Camden: Wed 8pm, Carriage pub, Eversholt St NW1 (5 mins from Euston BR station).

14 Apr: Socialism and pre-Christian religions. Open discussion.

28 Apr: Is human nature a barrier to socialism? Harry Walters.

Chiswick: Fri 8pm, Chiswick Town Hall, Heathfield Terrace W4 (tube: Chiswick Park).

16 Apr: The rise and coming fall of the SWP. Adam Buick.

Clapham: Mon 8pm, Head Office, 52 Clapham High St SW4 (tube: Clapham North).

19 Apr: The change from capitalism to socialism.

Edmonton: Thurs 8pm, Angel Community Centre, Raynham Rd, N18.

22 Apr: Practical Steps to a New World Society (2).

Islington: Tues 8pm, Angel & Crown pub, 235 Upper St N1 (2 mins from Highbury tube).

20 Apr: A society without government, police or prisons. Steve Coleman.

MIDLANDS

Birmingham: Wed 7.30pm, Dr Johnson House (Friends Meeting House), Bull St.

Wed 28 Apr: Russia 1993—personal impressions. Vincent Otter.

NORTH WEST

Central Manchester: Mon 8pm, Unicorn pub, Church St.

19 Apr: Societies without money. Paul Bennett.

26 Apr: Crime—the failure of property society. Steven Kennedy.

South East Manchester: Wed 8pm, Wheatsheaf pub, Stockport Rd, Levenshulme.

28 Apr: Mayday, a worker's day.

Newton-le-willows: Thurs 8pm, Ram's Head pub, Earlestown.

15 Apr: Pit closures—the socialist solution.

SCOTLAND

Glasgow: Thurs 8pm, Room 1, Woodside Halls, St. Georges Cross

15 Apr: Crime, Kids and capitalism. Campbell McEwan

The Crime Wave: A Non-Hysterical Analysis

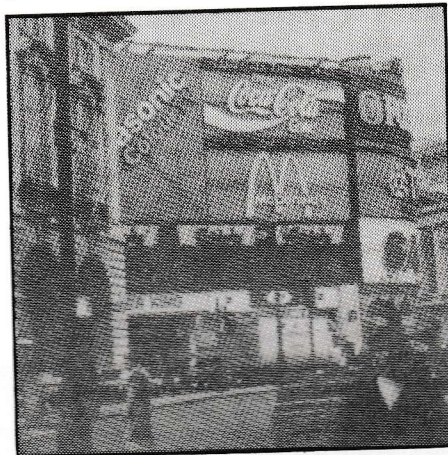
Camden Branch is organising an afternoon education conference on this subject on Saturday 9 May from 2pm to 6pm at Dick Shephard House, 6 Endsleigh St, London WC1.

Full details next month.

1993 ANNUAL CONFERENCE

The 89th Annual Conference of the Socialist Party will take place over Easter, Friday 9 April (from 10.15am to 5.15pm), Saturday 10 April (from 10.15am to 5.15pm) and Sunday 11 April (from 11.15am to 5.15pm). The venue is Conway Hall, Red Lion Square, London WC1 (tube: Holborn).

As all our meetings are open to the public as a matter of principle, anybody is welcome to attend and listen to the debates on policy, last year's activities and future plans.



Capitalism turns the world into one big market—place



THE SOCIALIST PARTY OF GREAT BRITAIN

OBJECT

The establishment of a system of society based upon the common ownership and democratic control of the means and instruments for producing and distributing wealth by and in the interest of the whole community.

DECLARATION OF PRINCIPLES

THE SOCIALIST PARTY of Great Britain holds:

1] That Society as at present constituted is based upon the ownership of the means of living (i.e. land, factories, railways, etc.) by the capitalist or master class, and the consequent enslavement of the working class by whose labour alone wealth is produced.

2] That in society, therefore, there is an antagonism of interests, manifesting itself as a class struggle, between those who possess but do not produce, and those who produce but do not possess.

3] That this antagonism can be abolished only by the emancipation of the working class from the domination of the master class, by the conversion into the common property of society of the means of production and distribution, and their democratic control by the whole people.

4] That as in the order of social evolution the working class is the last class to achieve its freedom the emancipation of the working class will involve the emancipation of all mankind without distinction of race or sex.

5] That this emancipation must be the work of the working class itself.

6] That as the machinery of government, including the armed forces of the nation, exists only to conserve the monopoly by the capitalist class of the wealth taken from the workers, the working class must organise consciously and politically for the conquest of the powers of government, national and local, in order that this machinery, including these forces, may be converted from an instrument of oppression into the agent of emancipation and the overthrow of privilege, aristocratic and plutocratic.

7] That as all political parties are but the expression of class interests, and as the interest of the working class is diametrically opposed to the interests of all sections of the master class, the party seeking working-class emancipation must be hostile to every other party.

8] THE SOCIALIST PARTY of Great Britain, therefore, enters the field of political action, determined to wage war against all other political parties, whether alleged labour or avowedly capitalist, and calls upon the members of the working class of this country to muster under its banner to the end that a speedy termination may be wrought to the system which deprives them of the fruits of their labour, and that poverty may give place to comfort, privilege to equality, and slavery to freedom.

Those in agreement with the above Object and Principles, and who wish to join the Socialist Party, should apply to the nearest branch or Head Office.



Why Lord Nuffield Looks After the Workers

This solicitude for the welfare of the worker reminds us very much of the care which those capitalists who are interested in the turf lavish upon their racehorses. There are, of course, slight differences. A racehorse does not have to worry about making ends meet, about getting clothes for the children, about coupons or rations, or whether he will get a job when the war is over. In fact, he just doesn't do any worrying at all. There is another difference between the relationship of the worker and the racehorse to their common master. If a racehorse is no longer wanted, he can be sold, and perhaps eventually finish up in the knacker's yard, and, in these days, as horse meat. But if a worker is no longer wanted, he is discharged, and sent about his business.

[From an article by "Ramo" in *Socialist Standard*, April 1943.]

SOCIALIST PAMPHLETS

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Socialism and Trade Unions	45p
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THE SOCIALIST PARTY of Great Britain

52 CLAPHAM HIGH STREET
LONDON SW4 7UN
Tel (071) 622 3811

The Executive Committee meets at the above address on the first Saturday of the month at 3pm. Correspondence should be sent to the General Secretary.

All articles, letters and notices for the *Socialist Standard* should be sent to the Editorial Committee, 51 Gayford Rd. London W12 9BY.

SUBSCRIPTIONS

Normal rate £8. Low/unwaged £5. Voluntary supporter's sub £10. Overseas (airmail) Europe £11, rest of world £15. Cheques and postal orders, payable to "The Socialist Party of Great Britain", to 52 Clapham High St, London SW4 7UN.

■ Branch ○ Group

London

CAMDEN ■ Wed 7.30pm. Carriage pub, Eversholt St, NW1. Corres: G. Sinclair, 78 Park Ave South, London N8 8LS. (071) 278 6676.

EAST LONDON ■ 1st Wed in month 8pm: Friends Meeting House, corner Albert Rd and Cleveland Rd, Ilford. 3rd Wed in month 8pm: 4 St. Mary's Ave, Wanstead. Corres: D. Deutz, 4 St. Mary's Ave, London E11 2NP.

ENFIELD & HARINGEY ■ Thurs 8pm. Raynham Road Community Centre, N.18. Corres: 17 Dorset Rd, London N22 4SL.

ISLINGTON ■ Tues 8pm. Angel & Crown, 235 Upper St, N1. Corres: D. Henderson, 55 St Johns Villas, London N19 3EE.

SOUTH EAST LONDON ■ 1st & 3rd Tues in month 8pm. Room 6, West Greenwich House, West Greenwich High Rd, SE10. Corres: E. Coffey, 37 Prince John Rd, London SE9 6QB. (081) 859 1496.

SOUTH WEST LONDON ■ Mon 8pm (except Bank hols). Head Office, 52 Clapham High St, London SW4 7UN. Corres: c/o Head Office.

WEST LONDON ■ 1st, 3rd & 5th Fri in month 8pm. Chiswick Town Hall, Heathfield Terrace (corner Sutton Court Rd), W.4. Corres: 51 Gayford Rd, London W12 9BY.

EDMONTON ○ Enquiries: Enfield & Haringey branch.

Midlands

BIRMINGHAM ■ Last Wed in month 7.30. Dr Johnson House, Bull St. Corres: R. Cook, 11 Dagger Lane, West Bromwich, B71 4BT. (021) 553 1712.

Northern Ireland

BELFAST ■ 1st & 3rd Wed in month 8pm. Party office, 41 Donegal St, BT1 2FG. Corres: same address.

North East

NEWCASTLE ○ Information on meetings and corres: T. Oakley, 44 McCracken Drive, Wideopen, Newcastle NE13 6NG.

SEAHAM ○ Corres: V. Maratty, 184 The Avenue, Seaham, Co. Durham SR7 8BQ.

Sunderland: Brian Barry, 86 Edmond Court, Ryhope, Sunderland SR2 0DY.

**VISITORS
WELCOME
AT ALL MEETINGS**

North West

BOLTON ■ 1st & 3rd Tues in month 8.30pm. Balmoral pub, Bradshawgate. Corres: Ken Aldred, 19 Moorland Grove, Bolton BL1 5RX. Hugh McLaughlin (0204) 844589.

LANCASTER ■ Information on meetings and corres: Paddy Shannon, 10 Green St, Lancaster, LA1 1DZ. (0524) 381329.

MANCHESTER ■ Mon 8pm. For details of venue see What's On page. Corres: P. Bennett, 6 Burleigh Mews, Hardy Lane, Chorlton, Manchester M21 2LB. (061) 860 7189.

SOUTH EAST MANCHESTER ■ Last Wed in month. Wheatsheaf pub, Stockport Rd, Levenshulme. Corres: Blanche Preston, 68 Fountains Rd, Stretford, Manchester M32 9PH. (061) 747 7458.

Cumbria: Norman Burns, 143A Cavendish St, Barrow, LA14 1DJ. Brendan Cummings, 19 Queen St, Millom, Cumbria, LA18 4BG.

Scotland

GLASGOW ■ 1st & 3rd Wed 8pm. Community Central Hall, 304 Maryhill Rd. Corres: I. Hamilton, 21 Kirkland St, Glasgow G20 6SY. (041) 333 0822.

EDINBURGH ■ 2nd & 4th Wed in month 8.30pm. Holyrood Tavern, Holyrood Rd. Brian Gardner, 73 Ashley Terrace, Edinburgh EH11 1RT. (031) 337 6681.

DUNDEE ○ Meets monthly. For information: Ian Ratcliffe, 16 Birkhill Ave, Wormit, Newport-on-Tay DD6 8PX. (0382) 541643. **Kircaldy**: D. Davidson, 10 St Clair St, Kircaldy KY1 2QE.

South & South East

CAMBRIDGE ○ Information on meetings and corres: Stuart Grainger, 35 Lemur Drive, Cherry Hinton, Cambridge, CB1 4XZ.

CANTERBURY ○ 2nd Fri in month 8pm. Bishop's Finger, St Dunstan's St., Westgate. Corres: P. Young, 39 South Court Drive, Wingham, Canterbury CT3 1AF. (0227) 720689.

COLCHESTER ○ First Thurs in month 8pm. The Grangary, the Arena Sports and Leisure Club, Circular Road East. Corres: Michael Gill, 149 London Road, Braintree CM7 8PT (0376) 331304.

Brighton: A. Pruden, 24 Park Crescent Rd, Brighton BN2 3HT.

East Anglia: M. Bennett, 48 Ashley Rd, Harwich, Essex CO12 4AW. (0255) 552153.

Luton: Nick White, 59 Heywood Drive, Luton, LU2 7LP.

Southend: H. Cottis, 19 Kingswood Close, Leigh-on-Sea, Essex, SS9 3BB.

South West

BOURNEMOUTH ○ 2nd Sun in month 8pm. 134 Spring Rd. Corres: D. Morriss, 134 Spring Rd, Bournemouth BH1 4PU.

ST. IVES ○ 1st Mon in month. Western Hotel, Royal Square (next to Savoy). Corres: Rod Gilson, 27 Tradrea Lane, St. Erth, Cornwall TR27 6JS.

Redruth: Harry Sowden, 5 Clarence Villas, Mt. Ambrose, Redruth, Cornwall TR15 1PB. (0209) 219287.

Wales

SWANSEA ■ 2nd & 4th Mon in month 7.30. Central Library, Alexandra Rd. Corres: Geoffrey Williams, 19 Baptist Well St, Waun Wen, Swansea, SA1 6FB. (0792) 643624.

Yorkshire

WEST YORKSHIRE ■ 3rd Sat in month 1.30 pm in Leeds. Ring Ron Edwards (0532) 788686 for details. Corres: c/o 52 Clapham High St, London SW4 7UN.

Doncaster: F. Edwards (0302) 530454. **Sheffield**: David Griffin (0742) 438334. **Skipton**: R. Cooper, 1 Caxton Garth, Threshfield, Skipton BD23 5EZ. (0756) 752621. **Wetherby**: D. Umpleby (0532) 892394.

World Socialist Movement

THE WORLD SOCIALIST PARTY OF AUSTRALIA: PO Box 1440M, Melbourne, VIC 3001. PO Box 8279, Stirling St, Perth, WA 6000.

BUND DEMOKRATISCHER SOZIALISTEN: Gusriegelstrasse 50, 1100 Vienna, Austria. Journal: *Internationales Freies Wort*.

THE SOCIALIST PARTY OF CANADA: PO Box 4280, Station A, Victoria, BC, V8X 3X8.

THE SOCIALIST PARTY OF GREAT BRITAIN: 52 Clapham High St, London SW4 7UN. Journal: *Socialist Standard*.

THE WORLD SOCIALIST PARTY (IRELAND): 41 Donegal St, Belfast BT1 2FG.

THE WORLD SOCIALIST PARTY OF NEW ZEALAND: PO Box 1929, Auckland, NI.

THE WORLD SOCIALIST PARTY OF THE UNITED STATES: PO Box 405, Boston, MA 02272. Journal: *World Socialist Review* 70p.

VARLDSSOCIALISTISKA GRUPPEN: c/o Dag Nilsson, Bergsbrunna villaväg 3B, S-752 56 Uppsala, Sweden.

All journals obtainable from the Socialist Party's Head Office, London. Prices include postage.



Death Ships

When the oil tanker Braer sank off Shetlands in January it was a media event. It was great TV. Storm-struck shores, dying sea birds and earnest local politicians looking grim and concerned.

What is not generally realized is that it was not an isolated episode.

In the past three years alone, 38 vast bulk carriers, have either sunk without trace or suffered severe structural damage. Around 40 oil tankers . . . have also been lost during the same period. (Observer, 14 February).

In a Panorama programme *Scandal at Sea* (BBC1, 15 February) it was reported that in the last three years 300 seamen had lost their lives in "accidents" in bulk carriers. As one bitter seaman said "people are concerned about the plight of birds but little is done about dead seaman".

It's just another example of the callousness of capitalism. What are the lives of workers worth compared to the insatiable drive for profit?

Menace of the Mob

The killing of James Bulger was a dreadful event but so was the behaviour of some of the crowd outside Bootle magistrates' court. This lynch-mob mentality has shown itself on many similar occasions. Indeed, the mob wanted the blood of an innocent 12-year-old boy who was wrongly detained by the investigating police.

Are these people so blind that they have never noticed how often the police hold suspects during murder enquiries only to later release them? After the murder of the young woman on Wimbledon Common last year the police held several unfortunate men who had nothing to do with the killing.

All this plus the numerous examples of people being "fitted-up" for crimes they did not commit should be warning

enough for anyone that an arrest is proof neither of guilt nor of police infallibility.

Services Rendered

Two men got a pay-off in February for services rendered. One was a Glasgow man who had worked for 47 years at Albion, part of Leyland-DAF. He never had a day off sick but his severance pay was £6,150 (£135 per year), the very minimum he could get. To add insult to injury the company thanked him for his "exemplary conduct and faultless timekeeping" (*Daily Record*, 18 February).

The other man got £5.2 million. He was Thomas Ward, an American lawyer, and the money was his "success fee" for the part he played in helping Guinness take over Distillers in 1986.

One man spends a lifetime creating real wealth and is sent packing with a pittance while another is paid 845 times as much for a spot of legalistic ducking and diving. There could hardly be a more accurate measure of capitalism's values than this.

Market Madness

Like every other car-maker, Mercedes of Germany have problems. Because of falling sales and profits the company wants to cut production from 600,000 cars to 505,000 in 1993.

This has meant the introduction of short-time working plus plans to cut 15,000 jobs. Problems solved? Not one bit because Mercedes workers are so worried by all this that they are refusing to go sick and are, as a company official put it, "working like madmen". The result is that output has increased so there will have to be even more short-time working!

In socialism cars will be produced for use instead of for sale, so the madness of the market won't come into it.

Enough cars will be produced to satisfy society's requirements and the people who make them can then do other things and not be reduced to "working like madmen".

Advice to a Prof

Professor Alan Walters, Mrs Thatcher's former economic adviser, has accused John Major of lacking "any firm set of ideas" and of not having "understood markets at all" (*A Brief History Of Our Time*, C4, 14 Feb).

Who does, prof, who does? For example, did all those stock market dealers and analysts understand their market was about to collapse before Black Monday in October 1987?

And it's easy for the prof to lecture politicians, but they, unlike him, have to take political as well as economic considerations into account and all too often the two simply don't mix. Just look at all those ideologues, left and right, who came into office armed with a "firm set of ideas" and then had to throw the lot overboard!

The prof should stick to his ivory tower and give heartfelt thanks that he doesn't have to wrestle with capitalism in all its bewildering complexity.

A Familiar Tale

Everyone knows how the recession has hit people in the inner cities, the black community, the big council ghettos and even business executives, but how has it affected Britain's Jewish population?

An article in the *Jewish Chronicle* on 29 January makes clear that Jews are faring no better than any other group, with 10 percent unemployed, people forced to give up their homes, many appealing to charities for help, money problems causing marital breakdown, and school leavers unable to get jobs.

And this applies especially to those who come from the leafy suburbs of London and other major cities, people who had thought themselves immune to hardship:

In 1993, the stereotype of the community, successful, wealthy and middle-class is far removed from the reality.

The common idea that all Jews are rich always was nonsense, but many who were at least "comfortable" are no longer even that.